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Fast Facts

BULLETIN 68 | MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023

Recent Updates

Professional Regulatory Bodies in Ontario Must Remove Canadian Work Experience Requirement

Under amendments to the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act*, professional regulatory bodies in Ontario are prohibited from requiring Canadian experience for registration with the association and/or skilled trade. Professional regulatory bodies must comply with this requirement by December 2, 2023.

Regulated professions and trades that fall under this Act include teachers, engineers, architects, social workers, plumbers, and electricians, among others, but does not include health-related professions. Professional regulatory bodies can apply for an exemption based on public health and safety reasons. Regulators will be fined up to \$100,000 for non-compliance.

Provincial Updates

A Reminder: Ontario Minimum Wage Increase

Effective October 1, 2023, Ontario's minimum wage will increase to \$16.55 per hour up from \$15.50 per hour.

New Statutory Holiday in British Columbia

Effective September 30, 2023, the province of British Columbia will recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday. Employees who work in provincially regulated workplaces will be entitled to a paid day off every year on September 30.

Naloxone Administration - Online Training

The Government of Ontario has set up a partnership with the Canadian Red Cross to provide free supplementary training related to the amendments under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*. You can visit the Canadian Red Cross website by [clicking here](#), and sign up at least 1 employee for the free training program. It should take them 1 hour to complete the online course which will generate the training records and send a naloxone kit to your workplace on completion. We would recommend the employee who takes the training is also a certified first aider, and that you coordinate for more than one person to take the training, if possible.

We recommend training additional staff, i.e. any other first aiders, JHSC members, supervisors, etc., using this short video from the Ontario Harm Reduction Network, found by [clicking here](#) and scrolling down the page.

Wildfires - What You Need to Know

As wildfires continue in Canada, it's important to be aware of the symptoms and effects of smoke exposure, and how to protect workers.

Symptoms and Effects of Smoke Exposure

Symptoms of smoke exposure range from mild, such as headaches, mild cough, runny nose, phlegm, eye, nose and throat irritation, to more serious, such as dizziness, chest pains, severe cough, shortness of breath, wheezing (including asthma attacks), and heart palpitations (irregular heart beat). Some people may be more vulnerable to smoke exposure, including seniors, pregnant people, infants and young

children, people who work outdoors, people involved in strenuous outdoor exercise, and people with an existing illness or chronic health conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, lung or heart conditions. Workers who work outside are most exposed to wildfire smoke, but workers who sporadically work outside (i.e. transportation, delivery services, etc.) can also be exposed, as well as indoor workers when smoke comes into the workplace through HVAC systems or opened windows.

Protecting Workers:

- Check your local air quality conditions to decide whether it's safe to be outdoors. You can check the air quality health index (AQHI) by [clicking here](#), and review special air quality statements from Environment Canada by [clicking here](#).
- Move work indoors if possible. Limit strenuous outdoor work as much as is possible. Any workers who experience difficulty breathing should reduce their efforts or cease work altogether. If the smoke levels in the area are high, the workers should temporarily relocate to another air where the air is cleaner. The work should be rescheduled until the quality of the air is improved.
- Respiratory equipment may be used in order to reduce the exposure to smoke particulates. Any respiratory equipment selected should be in accordance with the Canadian Standard Association (CSA) Standard Z94.4-18.
- Workers who mainly work in vehicles (i.e. transportation, delivery, etc.), should keep their vehicle vents and windows closed. If possible, workers should operate their air conditioning in the "recirculate" mode, and open their windows in areas that have good air quality in order to prevent the build-up of carbon dioxide inside the vehicle.
- For workers working indoors, ensure that your HVAC system's air filters are cleaned, and ventilation systems are functioning well in order to remove any smoke particulates in the air.
- Reduce the level of smoke particulates in the air by providing portable air cleaners equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters in the workspace.
- If any workers display severe symptoms of smoke exposure, they should receive medical attention from a health care practitioner immediately. Also, be sure to check in with workers about their physical and mental health. Ensure that workers are aware of their options for mental health support, such as an employee assistance program (EAP), if available. Encourage workers to seek help.

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